

leagues around), without being persecuted, harassed, molested, or constrained in any way on account of religion against their conscience.³¹ This paragraph, which formed the preamble to the guarantee of civil and religious rights in the most explicit terms, was well worth these thirty-five years of terrible bloodshed. The edict more particularly declared Protestants eligible for all public offices, and instituted special courts in several of the Parliaments, whose members were composed of an equal number of Protestants and Catholics, for the administration of justice to litigants of the two creeds (*chambres miparties*). It guaranteed their admission to all schools, colleges, and hospitals, and granted permission to found such in all the towns where their worship was legalised. It even permitted them to retain the fortified places of which they were in possession, on condition, however, of desisting from all political intrigues, whether within or without the kingdom, or forming any league or association prejudicial to the royal authority and the terms of the edict. On no pretext were they to assemble in arms, or construct fortifications, or levy taxes for military purposes. The retention of the fortified towns was meant merely as a guarantee of good faith, not as a recognition of their political power ; but while Henry might justly presume 'on his ability to maintain the peace, this concession left them an organisation which might, and did in fact, become, during his son's earlier reign, the nurse of faction and civil war. It was left to Richelieu to improve on this part of the edict by suppressing a political and military power dangerous to order, while respecting its principle. That principle was, of course, not that of toleration in the modern sense. It was not that of full toleration even for the Huguenots. They must, for instance, observe the Catholic festivals ; their preachers and lecturers were not allowed the free expression of opinion in controversial matters; Protestant books might only be printed in Protestant towns. We should indeed greatly err if we mistook in Henry IV. the enlightened apostle of toleration pure and simple. The Edict of Nantes was the work of a politician, not of a philosopher in advance of his age. It sprang from no more profound views than those suggested by political necessity and the goodwill of the king towards his old comrades-in-arms and fellow-worshippers. Otherwise